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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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Point Lobos Safe

Many bird lovers from the Bay area have enjoyed visits to Point Lobos Reserve in Monterey County. Here Pigeon Guillemots may be observed at close range, as they go in and out of crevices on the rocky north shore and nearby islets. One may often get close enough to watch a bird swimming beneath the surface of the clear water. It uses its wings to propel itself — flying under water, as it were — and the white patches twinkle through the green water; the large red feet trail behind. Black Oystercatchers pipe loudly from all the rocky shores and both Brandt's and Baird's Cormorants breed in the Reserve. On Bird Island, off the south shore, is to be found the northernmost breeding colony of the Brown Pelican.

Point Lobos is safe — at least for the present. Those who have written letters to the State Park Commission or have signed petitions will be glad to know that the danger has been averted. Before the announcement of the Japanese surrender the Army stated that it had decided to withdraw its request for the use of Point Lobos Reserve as a target area. They stated that they had found a more suitable place. The Point Lobos League feels that the aroused public expression against the proposed violation of an inviolate sanctuary was a strong factor in making the Army think twice about pressing their request for the use of the area.

The policy for the administration of Point Lobos is like that of no other state owned area. The principal idea in back of it is that all natural features are to remain intact, that there be no interference by human beings other than the maintenence of one short road and a few unobstrusive trails. Plant and animal life are to be unmolested; no live trees are to be cut; dead trees, even, are to be left alone because they are inportant for the feeding and nesting of birds. Thus Lobos is a perfect field for the scientific observation and aesthetic enjoyment of the interplay of natural forces unspoiled by man.

Although this is the expressed policy of the State Park Commission, from time to time certain interests try to persuade the Commission to allow them special permission to break the rules. Several times motion picture companies have been allowed to take movies at Lobos. They always affirm that no damage will be done but damage invariably results; roads are built, bushes are cut, herbs and grasses trampled with the inevitable result that the natural balance is disturbed, requiring years to be regained.

Recently such an important relic as an Indian shell mound was cut through. The resultant damage obviously can never be repaired.

The request of the military organization was for permission to establish a target area for ship to shore firing at the Reserve. They would have based LVT boats in Carmel Cove, the cove near the warden's house, and erected targets for .30 and .50 calibre guns on the north side of the Cypress Headland.

Firing at the rocks would have disturbed bird life, destroyed lichens and other slow-growing plants and endangered some of the most picturesque of the outlying group of cypresses. The cypresses are indigenous only on Point Lobos and Point Cypress. Point Cypress has been lost as a natural area because it is in the control of a commercial organization. Point Lobos remains as the last naturally seeded area for this species. The Cypress Headland is the focal point of the park and it was principally to protect it that the land was purchased at a cost of $600,000.00.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when a state of emergency existed, the Reserve was taken over by the Army. It was necessary then that they have it. But there was no emergency connected with the recently proposed training program. Friends of Point Lobos believe that once the Army understood that there is no other place in the world like Point Lobos (It can be stated advisedly that Lobos is unique) they looked for, and found a "better place down south."

This military threat has passed, but the Point Lobos League believes that we should be prepared to forfend against future misuses of the Reserve by civilian organizations. Those interested in becoming members of the League, or who would like to be informed of any impending violations that may occur in the future, should address the chairman of the Point Lobos League, Charis Wilson Weston, RFD 1, Carmel, California.

—Laidlaw Williams, Carmel, California, August 19, 1945.

White-Tailed Kite (Elanus Leucurus)

On June 9th, last, at his ranch in Napa County, the writer had a glimpse of a medium sized bird with white head and under parts which was taken for a gull because of its coloring, the manner of flight and the direction in which it was going.

On June 23rd, while walking from his cabin to a plateau probably 300 feet higher, the writer saw a medium sized bird with white head and breast, perched upon the highest dry branch of a small oak. This perch is a favorite observation point for many birds, as there is an unobstructed view for miles. As an approach was made, the bird flew downward from the plateau so that an excellent view was had of the black patch on the bend of the wing. After flying a short distance it hovered with rapid wing beats and tail outspread. There is no question as to its identification; it was the Kite. For two hours on Saturday it remained in the immediate vicinity perching for a while, then flying and hovering. Ocassionally it would dart toward the ground. Again on Sunday morning, the 24th, it was observed on the

same perch, which it would leave for a time, hover a bit and return.

It is an interesting observation in that the ranch surroundings are so different from those where the Kite is generally seen.

Hoffman states that the Kite is a "resident in river valleys from Santa Clara and Monterey Counties to Ventura County".

In Dawson's "Birds of California" is found the following:

"These kites nest at moderate heights in willow trees, or other convenient cover, in the vicinity of their chosen swamps."

At different times the Kite has been observed by the undersigned near swamps, damp meadows, rivers or lowlands, quite a contrast from the ranch environment, which has an elevation of about 1000 feet, of volcanic origin, dry at this time of the year and no running streams within a mile.

It may be that this bird came from the vicinity of the Napa Creek as you find in the March 1931 issue of "The Gull" an article entitled "Birds at Napa, California", with a list in which the White Tailed Kite is named.

—Joseph Webb, San Francisco, July 3, 1945.

More White-Tailed Kites in Napa County

On May 8, I saw a pair of White-tailed Kites at their nest atop a live oak on the bank of the Napa River north of town. The nest was approximately forty-five feet above the ground, and difficult to see.

On June 23, I observed a White-tailed Kite's nest in a tree of a prune orchard. Tree was in second row from fence enclosing wide pasture. Nest, well concealed by foliage, was about twelve or fifteen feet from ground. Four young at nest. One young flew to a nearby tree, other three remained at nest. Parents flew overhead, but did not approach closely. This nest was in vicinity of Yountville in the Napa Valley.

—Mrs Esther S. Henrie.

Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

The following observations have been reported:

5 Pintails — Aug. 12, 1 Snowy Egret—Aug. 13, and 15, Lake Merritt, Oakland, —Herman Leffler.

2 Western Tanagers—Aug. 16, Alameda, —Vira Scott.

Lesser Yellow-legs—Aug. 17, Alameda, —Junea W. Kelly.

August Meeting

The 335th meeting of the Association was held August 9, 1945, with vice-president, Mr. Walter Bradley, presiding.

Mr. Albert C. Hawbecker, Science instructor in Madera High School, addressed the club on "The White-Tailed Kite", a subject in which he has been specially interested for some years. His talk was much enjoyed.

September Field Trip

To be taken on Sunday, September 16, to see shore birds on Alameda beaches. Meet at High and Santa Clara in Alameda at 10:45 a. m.

San Francisco members and friends take 10:07 a. m. bus marked "O" at Fremont Street near Mission Street, San Francisco, to High and Santa Clara Streets in Alameda. There, transfer to Bay Farm Island Bus, leaving same at first turn to the left after passing the Golf Course on Bay Farm Island and walk to end of the pond.

Berkeley and North Oakland members take Oakland - Alameda bus at Broadway and 16th Street to Santa Clara and High Streets where the group will meet and transfer to Bay Farm Island bus.

Bring lunch and binoculars.

Leader—Mrs. Junea W. Kelly.

September Meeting

The 336th meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific will be held on Thursday, September 13 at 7:30 p. m. in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

Our past president, Mrs. Junea W. Kelly, is to favor us with a talk on "Shore Birds". A few bird skins will be used during the talk.

This will be a fine opportunity to learn of the aquatic birds to be seen on our field trip on the 16th of September.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p. m.
Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Sts., San Francisco

Membership dues, payable January 1st, $3.00 per year
Student memberships, $1.50 per year Life memberships, $50.00

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer